Amendments to the Claims

1.(withdrawn) A structure, comprising:

a pliable sheet; and

first and second stationary supports supporting the sheet, the supports oriented relative to one another such that a distance between the supports at one part of the sheet is greater than a distance between the supports at another part of the sheet.

2.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 1, wherein the supports are rigid.

3.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 1, wherein the first support is curved.

4.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 1, wherein the first and second supports are curved.

5.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 1, wherein each of the first and second supports comprise discontinuous segments, first ones of the segments spaced apart a first distance at one part of the sheet and second ones of the segments spaced apart a second distance less than the first distance at another part of the sheet.

6.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 1, wherein the supports are integral to the sheet.

7.(withdrawn) A structure, comprising:

a pliable sheet;

first and second supports extending along and supporting the sheet, the supports oriented relative to one another such that a distance between the supports at one part of the sheet is greater than a distance between the supports at another part of the sheet; and

a protrusion extending along and protruding from the sheet between the supports.

8.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 7, wherein the supports extend along a first side of the sheet and the protrusion protrudes from a second side of the sheet opposite the first side.

9.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 7, wherein the protrusion comprises a pliable protrusion.

10.(withdrawn) A structure, comprising:

a pliable sheet;

a generally V shaped support extending along and contacting one side of the sheet; and

a pliable strip attached to or integral with the sheet, the strip positioned between the supports along a second side of the sheet opposite the first side.

11.(withdrawn) A structure, comprising:

a span of flexible material;

a pair of elongated supports supporting the span, the supports oriented relative to one another in a generally V shaped configuration such that a distance between the supports at one part of the span is greater than a distance between the supports at another part of the span; and

an elastomeric pad affixed to or integral with the flexible material between the supports.

12.(currently amended) A sheet media input structure for a sheet media processing device, comprising:

a sheet media supporting surface; and

a media sheet separator downstream from the supporting surface along a media path that extends from the supporting surface to and along the separator, the separator configured to separate a top sheet on the stack from a next-to-top sheet in the stack by resisting the movement of sheets along the media path; and wherein

the separator comprises a span of flexible material and a plurality of supports supporting the span, the supports oriented relative to one another such that the degree of resistance of the separator to the movement of sheets along the media path varies along the length of the separator from a greater resistance at an upstream part of the separator to a lesser resistance at a downstream part of the separator.

13.(canceled)

14.(currently amended) The structure of claim 12 ~~13~~, wherein ~~the separator comprises:~~

the span of flexible material comprises a pliable sheet[[;]] and the plurality of supports comprise first and second supports extending along and supporting the sheet, the supports oriented relative to one another such that a distance between the supports at the downstream part of the separator is greater than a distance between the supports at the upstream part of the separator; and

the separator further comprises a protrusion extending along and protruding from the sheet between the supports.

15.(currently amended) The structure of claim 12, wherein ~~the separator comprises:~~

~~a span of flexible material;~~

the plurality of supports comprise a pair of elongated supports supporting the span, the supports oriented relative to one another in a generally V shaped configuration such that a distance between the supports at a first part of the span is greater than a distance between the supports at a second part of the span; and

the separator further comprises an elastomeric pad affixed to or integral with the flexible material between the supports.

16.(original) The structure of claim 15, wherein the second part of the span is upstream along the media path from the first part of the span.

17.(original) The structure of claim 16, wherein the pad is oriented at an obtuse angle relative to the supporting surface.

18.(withdrawn) A sheet media input structure for a sheet media processing device, comprising:

a sheet media supporting surface; and

a media sheet separator downstream from the supporting surface along a media path that extends from the supporting surface to and along the separator, the separator comprising

a span of flexible material,

a pair of elongated supports supporting the span, the supports oriented relative to one another in a generally V shaped configuration such that a distance between the supports at a first part of the span is greater than a distance between the supports at a second part of the span, the second part of the span upstream along the media path from the first part of the span, and

an elastomeric strip affixed to or integral with the flexible material between the supports, the pad oriented at an obtuse angle relative to the supporting surface.

19.(withdrawn) The structure of claim 18, further comprising a sloped wall oriented at an obtuse angle relative to the supporting surface and wherein the strip extends along the wall.

20.(withdrawn and currently amended) A printer, comprising:

a print engine;

a sheet media input surface;

a pick/feed mechanism operative to move media sheets from the input structure to the print engine along a media path;

a controller configured to control operations of the print engine and the pick/feed mechanism; and

the input structure including a sheet media supporting surface and a media sheet separator downstream from the supporting surface along the media path, the separator configured to separate a top sheet on the stack from a next-to-top sheet in the stack by resisting the movement of sheets along the media path and wherein the

separator comprises a span of flexible material and a plurality of supports supporting the span, the supports oriented relative to one another such that the degree of resistance of the separator to the movement of sheets along the media path varies along the length of the separator from a greater resistance at an upstream part of the separator to a lesser resistance at a downstream part of the separator.

21.(withdrawn and currently amended) The printer of claim 20, wherein ~~the separator comprises:~~

the span of flexible material comprises a pliable sheet[[;]] and the plurality of supports comprise first and second supports extending along and supporting the sheet, the supports oriented relative to one another such that a distance between the supports at the downstream part of the separator is greater than a distance between the supports at the upstream part of the separator; and

the separator further comprises a protrusion extending along and protruding from the sheet between the supports.

22.(withdrawn and currently amended) The printer of claim 20, wherein ~~the separator comprises:~~

~~a span of flexible material;~~

the plurality of supports comprise a pair of elongated supports supporting the span, the supports oriented relative to one another in a generally V shaped configuration such that a distance between the supports at a first part of the span is greater than a distance between the supports at a second part of the span; and

the separator further comprises an elastomeric pad affixed to or integral with the flexible material between the supports.

23-25. (canceled)